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Listening Well Report



The Voice of Holbeck



January 2021

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1: Introduction

1.1 Foreword from Listening Well

Holbeck is one of the most historically important suburbs of Leeds. It has been part of the Leeds landscape since the 13th Century and whilst the first 400 years were relatively uneventful the ensuing years have been vital to Leeds development into a major city. Holbeck was known as an ‘out township’ and one of ten such satellite communities that encircled the town of Leeds. Between 1801 and 1850 Holbeck was urbanised as a result of a rapid mushrooming of mills and foundries in the area that continues to this day. However, changes to the industrial landscape over much of the 20th century have meant that the economic and community demographics of Holbeck have also changed. Today Holbeck is listed as one of the West Yorkshire's most deprived urban areas. It is with all this history that this local community continues to face many challenges but also houses people of exceptional resilience.

Over the years there has been an ongoing relationship between local residents, Ward Councillors, council staff, developers and activist groups all seeking to “make Holbeck a more attractive and healthier place for everyone”, all working together and in their individual capacities on this cause. This has achieved varying degrees of success but also has been challenging as trust, communication and true resident value and involvement have not always been demonstrated as clearly as is needed in this context from those in powerful positions.

The people of Holbeck have always been and will continue to be passionate about their community and have an appetite for community voice and action. This has most recently been evident in the coming together of local organisations seeking to share a voice relating to the introduction by Safer Leeds and Leeds City Council of the Managed Zone and the Managed Approach, implemented in October 2014.

by Dennis Kitchen, Chair of Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum and Voice of Holbeck Committee Member.

1.2 Holbeck and the Managed Approach

Holbeck and the surrounding area has had a problem with street sex work for over a decade (see appendix for history). The approach to street prostitution was an enforcement approach up until October 2014 when the “Managed Approach” was created. The Managed Approach includes the work of Safer Leeds, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police and third sector partners who decided to create an area in Holbeck where street prostitution and kerb crawling could take place without fear of prosecution. This area is known as the Managed Area or the Managed Zone (see map on page 45).

Safer Leeds decisions are made by four people in senior positions, known as the Strategic Leads.

The Managed Approach (MA) aimed to:

- reduce the problems caused by street prostitution to residents, and businesses which currently suffer from such nuisance
- better engage with street sex workers to improve their safety and health, with a view to enabling them to exit this way of life
- reduce the prevalence of street sex working (and limit it to evenings and overnight)

This approach was intended to allow partners to provide active support to street sex workers to build trust and reduce the risks they are exposed to by providing targeted support services.

The MA also delivers more responsive street cleansing arrangements, after residents group Save Our Eyes campaigned for improvements since 2017. A small, dedicated team of West Yorkshire Police officers has grown since the inception of the MA and attempts to enforce the rules. Women are supposed to solicit only in the dedicated “zone” and only during the hours of 8pm to 6am.

Many residents believe that the three objectives above have not been met by the managed approach.

The street cleansing team has been a successful part of the MA. They have a dedicated worker and Scarab machine based locally which removes thousands of items of sex litter a year from the residential streets, parks and streets in the zone. Typical items removed are used condoms, used tampons, used drug needles & syringes, used baby wipes, clothing & human faeces.

This approach has been controversial since its inception and following lobbying from local residents, who argue that the scheme has a detrimental effect on their communities, Leeds City Council voted in favour of a review in November 2018.

1.3 Listening Well Methodology

Background to Voice of Holbeck and Listening Well

In October 2017, a council residents meeting took place at St Matthew’s Community Centre in Holbeck with a focus on the Managed Approach. At this meeting, members of the community shared passionately the issues they were facing, concerns they had, the impact the managed approach was having on the community and asked questions about solutions. As a result, the council publicly made an ongoing commitment to meet with and listen to the local community in the form of a reference group.

Voice of Holbeck (formerly known as the Reference Group) was formed from within the community as a group of partners set up to liaise with the council, police and Safer Leeds in regard to the Managed Approach to Street Prostitution in Holbeck and the impact it was having on the community nearby.

Voice of Holbeck is a partnership of 14 community organisations including, schools, charities and churches: Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum, Holbeck Gala, The Holbeck, Holbeck Together, Cross Ingram Area Residents Association, St Luke’s Primary School, Ingram Road Primary School, Save Our Eyes, Holbeck Christian Fellowship, St Luke’s Church, Mosaic Church, St Lukes Cares, Ruth Gorse Academy and Holbeck Development Forum. The group aims to represent community voices on the managed approach and bring an end to street prostitution in the area. As a group they care deeply about Holbeck, the residents and the people who work here and want to see Holbeck be a thriving community, where people are safe and are proud of where they live.

During 2018, the Voice of Holbeck group met regularly and met with senior figures in the police, Safer Leeds and the council sharing concerns, speaking about ideas and building relationships. The group recognised that there needed to be more creative and innovative ways to ensure residents voices were truly represented and heard in decision making. As such, in February 2019, Voice of Holbeck launched the Listening Well Campaign at The Holbeck with the support of Leeds Citizens. ‘Listening Well’ was a community led, community driven listening campaign focusing on community safety and the Managed Approach in Holbeck.

Summary of Listening Well as approach

The Listening Well campaign was delivered by the Voice of Holbeck over approximately one year. The group did not seek to collect negative feedback about the Managed Area, rather the events were designed to allow community members to voice their own stories and experiences. The intention was to support the development of a clear action plan to initiate change and accountable relationships with decision makers. The Voice of Holbeck was supported to deliver Listening Well by the community organising alliance, Leeds Citizens and a financial grant from Leeds Church Institute.

Nine public events, each involving two rounds of table conversations, sharing stories and ideas related to community safety and the Managed Approach were held during 2019-2020 in Holbeck. Volunteers took notes during the table conversations to ensure there was a record of the testimony and ideas shared. The Voice of Holbeck, would like to thank all of those who have taken part in one of the Listening Well events. There is power in numbers and power in stories: the process has worked so effectively and enabled this report to be produced because of brilliant community engagement and people bravely stepping forward to share their experiences.

From February 2019 to February 2020 the Listening Well events took place at various community locations and over **500** different people engaged in conversations through the process; ranging from children and young people to 90+ years old.

Community members who provided comment were demographically diverse and included migrants (often seldom heard voices in communities), young people, professionals & parents. All events were attended by strategic leads from the council, police and Safer Leeds as well as local councillors. Their role at these events was to listen to residents sharing their experiences of what life is like for them in Holbeck, specifically in relation to the Managed Approach. The format was important: everyone sat together, with the strategic leads listening to individual table discussions. The goal was to provide people with a supportive space to share potentially distressing experiences, that could be recorded for this final report but also heard directly by decision-makers for the Approach.

This report, therefore, reflects the diversity of voices within the Holbeck community, and a range of themes associated with living in the area and experiences associated with the Managed Area.

Summary of Leeds Beckett Involvement

Leeds Beckett University were commissioned to analyse existing data already collected by the Voice of Holbeck as part of the 'Listening Well' work undertaken by community members in relation to the Managed Area in Holbeck.

The researchers, Louise Warwick-Booth and Susan Coan had no input into the design of the research, and no role in the data collection. The researchers analysed data that had already been gathered by community members in the form of hand-written notes from all but one of the Listening Well events. One event was documented through recorded voice files, so these were listened to by the researchers as part of the analysis. Two paper-based surveys that had been conducted, again by community members were also analysed by Leeds Beckett Staff. The themes presented in this report were drawn from:

- hand-written note-books completed at the events
- hand-written structured templates completed from the events
- submissions from community members who were unable to attend events (both in paper form, and online)
- voice files from mobile phone recordings taken at one event
- hand-written paper-based questionnaires from school-based locations. Summary data from two school-based surveys (conducted separately to the above events) are also included in this report: Ingram Road Primary School (n=45) and Ruth Gorse Academy (n=227)

The sections written by LBU researchers in the final report based entirely on our independent analysis of the data supplied are:

- the entire findings in section 2 (the date of each quotation throughout is attributed to the event at which it was recorded)
- and section 3 with the title recommendations –which were drawn from the notes taken at events.

Details of Events

Event date	Host	Location
28th February 2019	Voice of Holbeck	The Holbeck, Working Men's Club
30th May 2019	Holbeck Together (formerly Holbeck Elderly Aid)	St. Matthews Community Centre
19th July 2019	CIARA (residents association)	Ingram Gardens Community Centre
15th September 2019	Mosaic Church	St. Matthews Community Centre
29th September 2019	St Luke's Church	St. Luke's School
29th October 2019	Holbeck Christian Fellowship	The Holbeck, Working Men's Club
21st November 2019	St Luke's Cares (Youth), Re:establish, Space Youth Group and St Luke's Church Youth Group	Holbeck Community Centre
28th January 2020	Ingram Road, parents meeting	Ingram Road School
11th February 2020	Save our Eyes	St. Matthews Community Centre

This report commissioned by the Voice of Holbeck presents the findings of the Listening Well campaign and is an attempt to highlight the views, experiences and comments of local residents and businesses relating to on street prostitution in the Holbeck area.

2: Findings

2.1 Impact of the Managed Area on adult residents

Feeling Safe/Unsafe in Holbeck

Many residents reported that they did not feel safe in Holbeck, with some of their concerns being directly related to the Managed Area. Whilst the majority of concerns were about public experiences, some women also said that they felt unsafe being in their own homes. An ex-resident said that she had stopped coming into Holbeck because of her son-in-law having a woman get into his car at a junction when he had stopped, as well as her own experiences of being approached by a man looking to buy sex from the street girls. At the May 2019 event, some women reported feeling unsafe and unable to walk about locally on an evening. Others said:

"I feel self-conscious if I choose to wear a dress and go out around Holbeck, but it hasn't stopped me going at night." Female resident, May 2019.

"I see girls getting picked up on a regular basis...in the day-time and night-time...in and out of cars...I don't think it is being managed at all...only a couple of weeks ago I was taking my boy to nursery...went under the tunnel...2 prostitutes were smoking heavy drugs in the tunnel and said sorry for doing it in front of my son." Female resident, July 2019

A female resident said that she used to feel safe in Church but that there had been incidents there associated with the sex workers, resulting in the Police being called. Others discussed feeling safer in summer, when it was lighter, with the darker winter nights meaning that people stayed inside their houses more.

At the May 2019 event, a resident reported feeling unable to use the local green spaces because of the needles, glass and litter in these areas. Residents also discussed how the weather and time of year affected the Managed Approach. When the weather is warmer there is an increased presence of sex workers, which affected their feelings of safety. These concerns were reiterated at the January 2020 event, where residents discussed feeling safer in the day-time and staying in more during winter because of concerns about safety in general, and more specific worries associated with the Managed Approach.

At the January 2020 event, lots of residents reported feeling safe at the Ingram Road School (where the Listening Well Event was taking place). One female resident reported that the Managed Zone was not affecting her life.

Gender and feeling safe or unsafe in Holbeck: local women being approached for sex

Women at all events said that they felt unable to walk alone at night, with some concerns and fears being attributed to the presence of the Managed Area. Several local women reported being approached by men looking to buy sex, which compromised their feelings of safety. One woman reported that she works shifts and comes home late. In her experience it is not unusual to be approached by 'punters'. Whilst she doesn't feel unsafe, she feels that she should not have to experience this. Another said that she was *"concerned about male violence as when she had been walking to a prayer event, a man had asked her if she was doing business."* She had said no, and the man went on his way. This was commonly reported by women at the events:

"I have been followed by a man asking if I am working myself" Female resident, February 2019

"Through being a female, I don't feel safe walking around especially on a night...I have someone with me. My daughter who is 19, asks me before she leaves the house if she looks like a prostitute. She has been approached 3 times asking is she is a prostitute and followed home so we started to get her taxis to and from work...taxi costs £4.50 each way...she is a student so that cost makes a difference...I have lived in Holbeck since she was a baby, and then she used to play on the street." Resident, July 2019

"Daughter walking down Rydall Terrace...man approached her in a car and asked if she wanted to earn any more, when she said no, he asked if her friends did...She was also approached whilst at high school in her uniform, she was asked if she wanted sex, if she would give a blow job...It has happened to my friends' children too...this was at 2.15pm in the afternoon, outside of the zone." Resident, July 2019

A man said that *"my wife doesn't feel safe going out"* (February 2019), a sentiment that was echoed by other men in relation to their partners' safety, and several women. He went on to talk about the 'Holbeck Look' that women get from men looking for sex, when they are debating if female residents are sex workers or not:

"That is what my wife says, she says I can feel safe...but she can't...I don't have to think about what I wear...my wife on the school run will wear jeans, a baseball cap, hoodie...she hasn't got a choice...I tell her to get a taxi but she feels that we shouldn't have to pay when we should be able to walk." Male community resident from Beeston, July 2019

Another female resident reported that she had been called a slag for ignoring punters when she was asked *"how much for a quickie?"* (February 2019). Another woman described her experiences of feeling uncomfortable and scared:

"Walking on my own, there was a man ahead of me. He turned to see me and slowed down. Didn't have any charge on my phone, so I crossed the road and ran. I felt horrible, scared and uncomfortable. It was on Water Lane, about 6 months ago at about 5pm." Female resident, September 2019

Another resident said that she felt stigma and vulnerability because of living in Holbeck, despite having nice neighbours and good relationships with them, she also saw evidence of 'girls' (sex workers) everywhere. She had tried to sell her house without success but could not afford to live in a different area.

General feelings of safety

Many residents said they that felt unsafe unless they were at home with their doors locked, because the area was unsafe in general (October 2019): *"I do feel safe only in my own home."* (Female resident, written response September 2019). Another resident just said, *"you should never walk alone"* (September 2019). Several residents at various events said that they preferred to drive, rather than walk as this felt safer. Others said:

"I don't feel safe unless I am in the house with my door locked, and at the slightest noise, I close my windows. I don't go to some of the shops, or out after dark. When I go to work at 6.30am,

so the zone is in full swing, cars are slowing down, it is not nice to walk down by yourself."
Female resident, July 2019

"In Holbeck, there is no safe place, especially in the evenings or early mornings." Female resident, written response September 2019

"You cannot feel safe in Holbeck, people are drunk, stoned not only in the evenings but during the day-time, they accost people, provoke, shout, are aggressive and want to sell stolen things or drugs." Female resident, written response September 2019

"People are outside my house, shouting, smoking weed and selling drugs. I have a 2 year old."
Resident, January 2020

"Drugs are a really big problem in Holbeck, all through the day and not just at night, I won't walk about on my own." Resident, February 2020

For some residents their safety was related to specific local places and the experiences associated with these:

"I feel safe at youth clubs, inside buildings and I feel safe when people who are working are there." Resident, October 2019

"I recommend staying on the main roads." Resident, October 2019

"I have a friend with a 17 year old daughter, wouldn't let her go out at night alone" Female resident, February 2019

"I wouldn't come here on my own...on an evening. I go out in the day but not after teatime. Not after 6pm, even to the shop around the corner." Older female resident, July 2019

"There are too many armed robbers, they stole our car and two bicycles and they smashed the car glass. I am scared to live in Holbeck." Resident September 2019 – written response

"From the evening, going on Moor Road when I was going to work, I saw them (not clarified who) punching someone there. And at the fun fair, they put a knife on someone so we are not safe in Holbeck" Resident September 2019 – written response

"I saw a man take down his trousers and expose himself to a young girl last summer, so I reported it to the Police." Resident, January 2020

At the February 2020 event residents mentioned that there had been a murder close by, as well as a serious assault which had resulted in a business closing and an associated financial loss for the owner. One male resident said:

"Still frustrated, feel sorry for prostitutes and no sympathy for kerb crawlers...Leeds City Council are typical politicians, support the minority to the detriment of the majority. They seem to be on a personal crusade" February 2020.

Others reported feeling safe in the day, but then unsafe in the evening because of experiencing groups of people being on the streets:

Not feeling safe was for some part of the issue of anti-social behaviour in the area, because residents witnessed young people drinking in the street and had experienced vandalism and theft. Stigma associated with the area was also reported at some events, with residents not admitting where they lived to people outside of the area, and children being teased at school. Drugs were repeatedly cited as an issue across all of the events, linked to both crime and the presence of sex workers. Some residents stated that they made sure they did not walk alone in certain areas, or when their neighbours were at home. More positively, supportive neighbours were noted at some events:

“My neighbours helped me when a drunken man came into my house, they called the Police. We now always keep the door locked.” Resident February 2020

Anti-social aspects associated with the Managed Area

For some residents the general increase in anti-social behaviour was seen to be linked to the existence of the Managed Area:

“I am connecting them both together...we are having a lot of strange cars, strange people, walking around, just looking at females in an undesirable way.” Resident, July 2019

“I feel safe at home with my doors locked and curtains drawn. The council lock Holbeck cemetery so that helps, it isn’t totally effective as they climb around...the prostitutes also say that they don’t feel safe. Resident (name) stopped one (sex worker) outside St. Matthews a couple of weeks ago and he asked her, why are you not in the zone and she said it was because she didn’t feel safe there...the zone is run by Eastern European pimps and they don’t want the English girls around, they are drug addicts and have hard lives...the Eastern Europeans are pretty girls.” Male resident, July 2019

“Whole thing locally is so intertwined, it blows my mind that we’ve allowed it to get to the point where we need a clean-up team in an area that is so devalued already. It teaches kids that people are consumable commodities it is a bad reflection for society. Horrific for self-worth, people should be taught that they matter.” Resident, September 2019

“It (Managed Area) has increased drugs, harder drugs, violence. It has a ripple effect. It is catastrophic.” Resident, September 2019

“The problem is pimps and drug dealers.” Resident, October 2019

“The area is not regarded as a good area.” Resident, January 2020

“People do say, ‘what are you living in Holbeck for – it is awful?’” Resident, January 2020

At the July 2019 event, there was discussion about how the existence of the area had encouraged sex workers to travel to Holbeck, and neighbouring areas such as Beeston, which was exacerbating the problems for community residents. These problems included car crashes, rapes, abusive neighbours, gangs on the streets, visible violence and issues associated with drinking and drug taking such as vomiting in the streets and littered needles (October 2019). Some residents also discussed being concerned about the safety of the sex workers, with some saying that they had seen the results of attacks on them with razor blades (November 2019), and some describing helping those who had been attacked (February 2020).

Residents reported frequently seeing drug use equipment littered in the area and others said that used condoms and needles were often left near the local school:

"I have picked up sex litter outside of my gate and will not let my grandchildren out until I have checked – makes me feel sick." Female resident, February 2019

"Sex litter isn't always condoms: baby wipes, toilet roll, kitchen roll, discarded underwear." February 2020

"Lots of needles, condoms, metal spoons and discarded clothes near the schools." January 2020

"We had 4 condoms outside our front door." February 2020

One man reported that he had experienced sex workers and drug dealers knocking on his door, saying that this was likely due to the result of the activities of the previous tenant. Another female resident stated in a written response:

"I had a group of prostitutes and pimps living on my street for a matter of months. We suffered daily abuse, cars pulling up and bringing girls into the area, drugs being dealt, fighting. It made me severely ill and feeling unsafe in my own house. We have had loud music through the night and this has impacted on my daily life." Not dated

One resident said that the area *"affected me every day. I walk out of the front door to go to work and see a prostitute. In the last month, I saw people having sex in my garden, there are used condoms, my wife is scared. I have started blockading the garden with bins. It is a blight on the area."* Male resident, October 2019

General concerns about witnessing people being drunk and hearing stories of negative experiences associated with the Managed Area were frequently discussed topics at events. An ex-resident attended an event and said that she had moved out of that the area because of the issues with housing, drug use and poverty rather than the sex workers. She reported that Holbeck was *"going down the pan"* (Female ex-resident, February 2019). Some residents discussed the poor housing in Holbeck, and the noise levels from others listening to music, as well as dog mess not being removed from the streets (September 2019, written responses), all of which made the area appear less safe. At the January 2020 event a resident described witnessing men slowly driving along his road, looking for women, and then *"picking"* them up. At the same event, a resident said:

"Yesterday a sex worker was being chased by a policeman and a police car was driving very fast, I didn't know where to go and I was very worried." Resident, January 2020

Experiencing anti-social behaviour from sex workers

Anti-social behaviour specifically from some sex workers was discussed at several events. For example a male resident said that *"they will shout abuse, threaten to firebomb the house, and often physically fight."* Other residents reported seeing sex workers arguing, having sex outside their houses and using drugs in public:

"Witnessed a cat fight between two prostitutes in broad daylight (Crosby Road) and this was day-time, felt very uncomfortable." Male resident, Event February 2019

"A few weeks ago, I was waiting for transport outside my gate and two ladies of the night walked past. At the bottom of the street one stopped by the bins and took off her knickers, changed into clean ones and put the dirty ones into the bin." Broad daylight: 9.20am."

Resident, October 2019

"I have experienced threatening behaviour at weekends as well." Male resident, February 2020

"I had to call the police and get them to collect a parcel of drugs that had been thrown into our garden...I told a man not to bring prostitutes into my street, he shouted abuse at me. ...At 3pm outside my house, a woman is saying are you looking for business? Holbeck has become a dumping ground. They (the sex workers) are so relaxed, they move about the area anywhere. The women look horrible, dishevelled, drug addicts, no teeth. A woman spat at a man"

Resident, February 2020

"I saw a teenager on a pedal bike at unusual hours (3am), appears to be delivering drugs to women on a weekly basis." Male resident, February 2020

"No one should have to see this" Female resident, February 2020

A female resident said:

"I lived on a street where druggies and pimps used to bring girls back at all hours, shouting abuse, partying all night, drugs have been dealt...this made me extremely ill and I suffer with health problems."

Many other residents reported witnessing anti-social behaviour as a result of the presence of sex workers such as shouting in the street, even in residential areas, and close to the schools. A male resident noted that the sex workers have gradually pushed into more residential areas over time. A voluntary sector worker (February 2019) also reported that street sex workers were moving into the residential areas as a result of being issued with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

Resident Testimonial

*"One morning in February 2019 I was woken up at around 5.45am by a woman shouting in the street. I looked out of my window and she was in my small garden! I went down and opened the door and realised that she was shouting down to the guy in the studio flat below me. He was stood in the doorway. She was cursing him and was calling him a paedophile. She then turned to **my** car outside **my** house and pointed to it and said to him "I know that's your car and I will come back and trash it". She then went away. I spoke to the guy (nice Hungarian guy who was my tenant) and asked him what was going on. He replied that he had just got off the bus after his night shift and that she had followed him. I started parking my car in other streets whilst I looked for somewhere else to live. I owned the house and had been happy there, but I decided to rent it off and I rented somewhere else in West Park. I had had enough. I had been woken up previously by prostitutes arguing with taxi drivers and was just fed up of being propositioned all the time. This event was the last straw for me."*

In relation to the emotional impact of the Managed Area, a resident (September 2019) stated that:

"The community is emotionally illiterate and have never been taught how to process pain. How do we build a generation that is emotionally literate when the zone screams lack of value?"

Witnessing sex acts

A number of residents reported witnessing sex taking place in their gardens and other public locations. One male resident, in a written response (undated) noted “countless” experiences of witnessing sex acts in the daytime outside his home:

“Last summer, 2.10pm, warm summers day...on the park, a man and a woman doing the business in full view of everyone.” Male resident, February 2019

“Yesterday I saw a punter having a blow job from a prostitute and they just carried on – this was at 2pm!” February 2019

“Cars are picking girls up, like taxis.” February 2019

“I have had men hammering on our door because they have got the wrong house, and then seen a sex worker having sex in the car outside our house.” Resident, February 2020

“In 2017 at 9am on Domestic Street, a car pulled up and the male driver asked me if I knew where the prostitutes were located. He then removed a book from his groin and exposed his penis to me. I was 80 years old at the time.” Female resident, written response

“I see girls naked and it is disgusting.” Resident, January 2020

Others had also witnessed men exposing themselves and reported that when they witnessed public sex, this did not stop those engaged in the acts, because *“men in cars are much more open and in your face, they don’t care about the consequences and think it is allowed.”* February 2019. In January 2020, a resident said that they had called the police when they had witnessed a sex act near St. Matthews Church. Another resident simply described the Managed Approach as “unsuccessful” in a written response in September 2019.

Sex workers propositioning local men

Men who attended the Listening Well events often spoke about their experiences of being offered sex whilst they were walking in the area, with one acknowledging that this occurred prior to the introduction of the zone:

“Last summer, waiting for the bus, two girls (sex workers) came over Holbeck Moor at 1pm in the afternoon and approached two of our men, we were going bowling. Felt sorry for the men they approached; police phoned but nothing seemed to be done whilst we were there.” Female resident, February 2019

“Sometimes approached on my way to work and one time a girl (sex worker) got really nasty. Makes me feel I have to look over my shoulder all of the time, and this is not in the Managed Zone area. Also seen girls go into the Church, St. Matthews to clean themselves down, feel it has got worse not better.” Male resident, February 2019

“Walking on Water Lane, on my ways to meet my wife in town, propositioned on Sunday.” Male resident, February 2019

“My husband has been approached by women asking for business around Crosby Road during the day.” Female resident, May 2019

One male resident who had lived in Holbeck for 21 years at the time of the event he attended, said that he had experienced a sex worker flashing her breasts at him when he was walking with his two young sons, but this had happened before the Managed Area had been established. St. Matthew’s Church was mentioned by several residents at various events as being an area where they had been offered sex, had witnessed women working as well as drug dealing occurring in the graveyard. At the February 2020 event a male said:

“I often get propositioned by women when I am walking home. I feel embarrassed and awkward when it happens. It happens far outside the managed zone. It is difficult when you own a house here, you can’t move on.”

Perceptions of change in the area resulting from the Managed Area

One female resident said she frequently saw sex workers outside of the zone when children were going to school, and in her view the presence of the zone has brought drugs into the area. These concerns were also discussed at the January 2020 event:

“Where I live, near Ingram Close, the sex workers are working outside of the Zone.” Resident, January 2020

Another female resident agreed with this viewpoint, saying that she had lived in Holbeck her entire life, and that the introduction of the zone had made the area worse because she no longer feels safe to walk alone at night, and had witnessed violence when a pimp was robbing someone near the post office. Another female resident reported how she felt that the area of Holbeck had declined since the introduction of the Managed Area:

“I have lived in Holbeck for 6 years before the zone was introduced, it was a decent place to live. We now have prostitutes on street corners, condoms, wet wipes, gloves, needles on our streets. You can’t let your children play out for fear of what they might see. There’s drug dealers and drug users doing deals on the street corners. You never know what might happen.”

Another said: *“A new culture has developed where people see street prostitution as being acceptable.”* Resident, October 2019

A professional also said:

“I have worked in the area for 25 years, and I believe that prostitution has developed since the Managed Zone has been implemented. Prostitutes have come from other towns and so safety is a major issue.” October 2019

Several residents felt that there was a lack of change in relation to the Managed Area, and said that they felt unheard:

“Going over the same old ground that is discussed in the paper, heard it on the TV - when will we see change?” Male resident, February 2019

One resident said that she felt that street sex work can never be managed, and another said that he felt that *“nothing happens when you ask residents how they want it to change.”* February 2019. A female resident at this event talked about the Managed Area feeling unsafe, safety not improving and the management of the area *“not making much difference.”* A female resident at the February 2020 event felt that the women were unsafe because they were often assaulted, adding:

“Let’s move it to an affluent part of the city and see what happens then!”

A male resident at the same event said:

“A lot of people feel worn-out, there’s a lot of apathy. They feel like they haven’t been listened to. It is a shame that now people don’t trust the decision makers and they’re not engaging with the process.” February 2020

A male resident at the event, discussed his experiences of hearing lots of negative stories about the area and noted that, whilst he originally defended the area, he no longer did because of hearing these views.

A woman reported that her dad had complained about litter on a specific street, and that this area was now always clean. In addition, a voluntary sector worker reported positive views at the same event, saying that she felt that the Police were taking a more supportive approach to the sex workers, and that more statutory services were also getting involved. Others reported feeling defeated and unable to feel positive about the future:

“I believe that nothing can be done about this now...nothing will change, they have attracted all sorts of people who are living here...the police need to find the punters, the dealers (the men)...no idea what to do about the women, and I watched my sister crumble to nothing and she is in fact dead now...it is done now.” Male resident, July 2019

Summary of the impact of street sex work on adult residents

Fear:

- Fear of being approached/propositioned by either sex workers or kerb crawlers
- Fear of walking alone, walking dogs, walking at night, walking to yoga and associated planning of routes when going out – which are the safest, where are residents least likely to see sex workers?
- Fear of helping others who are in trouble and/or fighting so instead trying to find well-lit areas, as well as other people
- Fear of sex workers causing trouble when under the influence of drugs and alcohol
- Fear of witnessing sex acts and drug taking in public places at all times of day and night at various locations (based on previous experience)
- Not being able to go out in an evening to the local shop, needing to take taxis to avoid walking
- Feeling less safe
- Bins have been provided for sex litter, but some felt that these encourage sexual activity and drug taking within the zone. Sex litter being frequently found outside St Luke's Primary School
- Negative emotions – frustration, depression, angry, feeling not heard, trouble sleeping.

2.2 Impact of the Managed Area on children

Children's understanding of the Managed Zone

Some parents said that the presence of street sex workers is a difficult issue to explain to children, "what do you tell your kids?" Children were seeing sex workers on a daily basis, some children had touched sex litter and others felt that it was not safe for their children to play outside:

"My child has been approached by men asking her for sex whilst in school uniform, going to school early in the morning and my eight year old has been flashed at by a female prostitute."
Female resident

"We have been here 10 years. We won't take the children to the local park: they are sparked out drunk, drugs in the park, local prostitutes have moved in on my street, having punters all day, no joke. There were no curtains up. Drug dealers have got worse in the area. I have video footage and pictures – drugs on the street, needles near the school, and on the park (Ingram Road). Even walking down the street... needles. We have had death threats, seen older people picked on and have their money taken. I have video if you want to see it?" Male resident, July 2019

"3 weeks ago, I had to take my grandchildren inside because there was a dancing prostitute stripping on Crosby Place at 2pm." Female resident, September 2019

"My children are 7 and 9 years old and they are frightened." Resident, January 2020

One mother said that every morning she had been asked by her daughter about the sex litter and drug equipment on the floor, as well as who the ladies are, concluding that this were all "nothing a child should have to see". Another stated:

"I am worried about my kids, and myself seeing undesirable things. It has got to the point that I can't leave my house without stepping on a condom. When you are walking...you see the big pots for Holbeck in bloom, they have condoms in them...beautiful! On an evening, there are aggressive people out, especially around the park. An incident recently involved a young girl having her phone taken. It is just an unsafe neighbourhood so I ask my husband to accompany me, to meet me after this meeting ends. This is not the life that I want. I feel that people are becoming vigilantes, they are looking out." Female resident, July 2019

Fears related to children's safety

Parents reported fearing for their children, with older schoolgirls feeling unsafe and being unhappy about going out alone, as they felt the need to constantly look over their shoulders. A 14-year-old female who had lived in the area since being 6 years of age said that she often sees women's clothes in the streets and is woken up every night by shouting which makes her feel uncomfortable. A local teacher reported young people being approached whilst on their way to and from school and seeing drug paraphernalia. This limits the school aims which encourage walking and the use of public transport.

Parents and residents also discussed the issue of sex litter restricting access to public spaces for young children:

"I have a 7-year-old, we do not go to the park. The childminder had to show the kids pictures of used condoms, wet wipes, needles etc. so they knew what not to touch – no child should have to see that." Female resident, July 2019

At the May 2019 event, a resident reported concerns about Leeds City Council not prioritising the needs of children when making decisions, saying *"Children's needs should be paramount, not so! Children seeing prostitutes and pimps impacts on their well being."*

At the same event, a woman reported that whilst she felt safe where she lived, she had witnessed men in cars looking for sex. Her nine-year-old daughter had also witnessed a woman injecting herself in a phone box. Another woman reported that her granddaughter had moved bedrooms because of noise nuisance in the area. Another woman reported that her granddaughter had experienced verbal abuse on the street, and that this had left her terrified. A woman simply said: *"My children are afraid."* Female resident, May 2019

In a written response (September 2019) a female resident said that *"It is a shame that we have to raise our children in this area, because we don't have no other choice. What can we say to our children, that sex street workers are ladies selling their bodies? How do I explain that to a 9 and 6-year-old?"*

At the January 2020 event, parents discussed their children's experiences of being teased in school because of them residing in Holbeck. Though they felt that their children were safe in school, when compared to being in public spaces, which led them to being fearful: *"doesn't feel safe letting them play out"* January 2020. Similar comments were made by others:

"My little boy is 5 and he has seen loads, he sees the 'bad ladies', he has picked that up from young girls talking, so he doesn't want to go to the park. He has seen the women laid in the road, drunk or stoned...it is the general feeling of unease when they are around." Female resident, July 2019

*"I have experienced prostitutes being dropped off outside my home, and my 6 year old son heard comments of 'You haven't paid, I gave you f*****g sex'"* Female resident, February 2020

An ex-resident gave this statement:

"One day I was bringing in my shopping, and a woman passed with 2 children close behind her. She asked me if I was looking for business. I thought the children were hers but they can't have been but they will have heard her." Male resident, February 2020

One father said:

"I don't let my two young lads play in the road outside our house. I feel like perverts have been invited into our community. The online blogging communities (for men who share their experiences of buying sex) have made me even more scared – you just don't know what people are thinking." February 2020

2.2a Young People's Voice: Youth Event

Young people's experiences of living in Holbeck

Young people discussed their experiences of living in the area, and reported negative experiences of the Managed Area:

"I was walking with a friend and saw a man near 360 Gym asking a woman how much she was selling herself for."

"I found a condom in the garden, it was gross."

"It's hard living in Holbeck...prostitutes getting in cars – makes me feel vulnerable. It is not managed at all, we are approached."

"Prostitutes talk to children."

"People mistake my mum for a prostitute, asking my mum if she is doing business"

"I have seen sexual activities in residential areas and been accused of robbing prostitutes" 14-year-old male resident

"If the Managed Zone was stopped, I wouldn't feel scared."

Young people also reported experiencing more general anti-social behaviour such as drug use, physical violence and verbal abuse, leading to them feeling vulnerable and unsafe:

"I don't feel safe, I have been threatened by older boys carrying knives"

"It is (Holbeck) full of crack heads, alcoholics, prostitutes and binge drinking in the park. I don't want to be here."

"I have seen drug-taking through needles"

"At night-time I don't feel safe."

Young people also discussed the ways in which their parents keep them inside especially during the winter months, when it is darker outside at an earlier time. One mentioned being careful when outside in terms of not having valuables on display. Several young people also reported that much younger children (aged 2 and 3) were seeing sex litter.

2.2b Parents' Voice: Ingram Road School Survey

Have you seen any of these on the streets of Holbeck?

Have you seen...?	Yes	Percentage
Prostitutes	38	84%
Alcoholics	35	78%
Sex Litter	30	67%
Needles	30	67%
Drug Users	29	64%
Kerb Crawlers	26	58%

Does this offend you?

Yes	28	62%
No	2	4%
Blank/not direct answer	15	33%

The majority of respondents (84%) had seen prostitutes in the area although only 62% expressed offence at seeing them or other issues in the area. For some, key concerns were the effect these behaviours would have on young people and the litter connected to prostitution, drugs and alcohol which they took action to clear up:

*"Yes, having to clear it up, had to buy a litter picker."
"It's not good for the children."*

In another case, the respondent felt it was better than where they had lived before:

"In Hungary it's normal so here doesn't seem too bad."

Have you been personally affected by of the above?

Yes	26	58%
No	11	24%
Blank/no direct answer	8	18%

Only a quarter of respondents (24%) felt they had not been personally affected. Respondents reported attacks on themselves or their children and being approached or propositioned by kerb crawlers and prostitutes.

*"Yes I've been propositioned at 5 in the morning." [Respondent 8]
"Yes, lots of incidents in street – I've been threatened, shouted at. People with knives fighting 3.30 [pm] in street." [R11]*

How safe do you feel walking around? Does the time of day affect this?

Not safe	24	53%
Safe	10	22%
No Answer	11	24%

People felt particularly unsafe at night, although many feel unsafe at any time of day. Most of the responses did not specify gender but for several who stated they were male, they felt safe, compared to the respondents who identified as female and did not feel safe. A number of respondents stated that they did not go out at night, this may also be due to having young children. Common issues identified

as making people feel unsafe were; being followed and stopped by men in cars; being approached by prostitutes asking for money or looking for business; seeing semi-dressed prostitutes.

How safe do you feel for your children?

Not safe	31	69%
Safe	7	16%
No answer	7	16%

The majority of respondents do not feel safe for their children [69%], having concerns about the presence of drug dealers, needles and condoms littered around the area, and the threat of violence from drug users and alcoholics. One person cited cars as the reason she felt her children were unsafe. One person who reported feeling safe, still did not want children to see what was happening in the Managed Area:

“Not safe at all. Worry they will fall on needles or condoms.” [R1]
“Not very. Alcoholics tempers etc. Drug users unpredictable.” [R36]

Has this changed during the time you have been living here?

Yes (worse)	21	47%
Yes (better)	2	4%
No (same)	14	31%
No answer	8	18%

Most respondents felt the area had changed for the worse in the time they have lived there (but in the majority of cases it was not stated how long this was). Two respondents felt it had improved and 14 felt it was the same. The last 10 years of austerity have seen a decline in many areas which were already identified as deprived, so it is unclear to what extent this perceived decline is due to the MA or to national politics. One person did state the changes coincided with the changes around where prostitutes worked:

“...seen it change. 13 years ago started changing where prostitutes working changed.” [R36]

There are extra police patrolling Holbeck. Have you seen them?

Yes	28	62%
No	14	31%
Blank/no direct answer	3	7%

Some people had seen police officers around the school. Several respondents had only seen extra police officers since the review started and it was highlighted that they were community support officers, not police: *“Not on daily basis; only recently since review started police patrols increased.” [R41]*

Does this make you feel safer?

Yes	18	40%
No	17	38%
Blank/no direct answer/NA	10	22%

40% of people felt safer for having the police presence, with one person noting it was “*Good thing for girls*” [R31]. For many (38%) they did not feel safer (some of those had not seen extra police and some still did not feel safer even if they had).

Have you ever reported incident to the police? If so, was their response helpful?

Yes	14	31%
No	19	42%
Blank/no direct answer/NA	12	27%

Several people thought there was no point reporting incidents to the police (n=3). Of the individuals who had reported an incident, only 2 people said the response was helpful, the others either did not say or did not feel their report was acted upon.

What would you like to see changed in Holbeck?

Change	Frequency	
Get rid of MA	16	36%
Make streets safer	7	16%
Cleaner – less litter	7	16%
No drugs	3	7%
New buildings/houses	2	4%
Everything on this list	2	4%
Amenities – shops and bus service	1	2%
Youth centre	1	2%
Better park	1	2%
More police	1	2%
Safe houses for the girls	1	2%

Over a third of respondents wanted to see an end to the managed area, although making the streets safer and cleaner were also common issues raised throughout this survey.

2.2c Young People’s Voice: Ruth Gorse School Survey

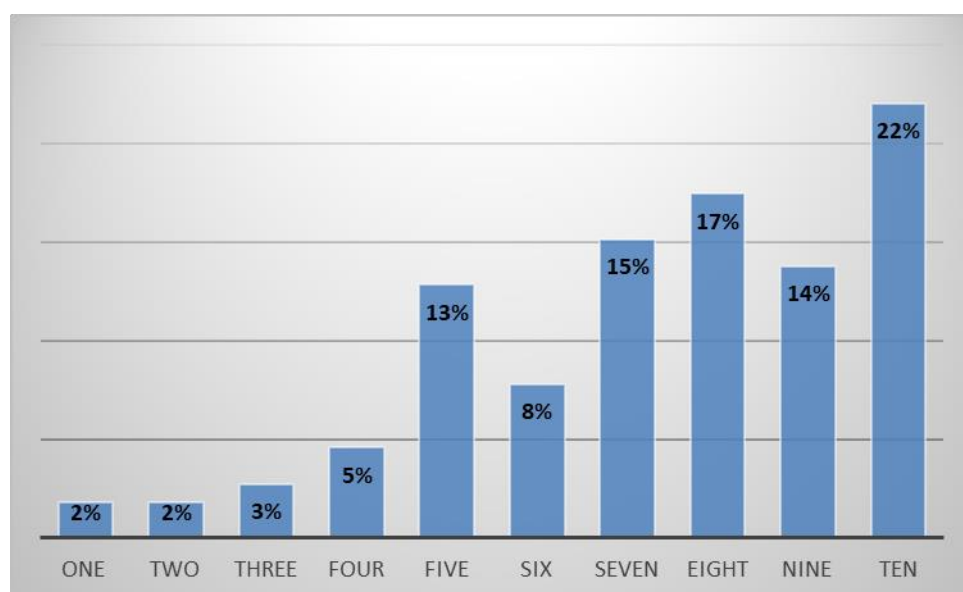
227 anonymised scanned surveys were completed by young people at the Ruth Gorse Academy, Leeds: 78 respondents reported no concerns, and 66 reported clear concerns such as seeing sex and drug paraphernalia and being aware of incidents in the area.

NB: many respondents do not live in Holbeck but there was no data provided on where students live.

How safe do you feel outside of school?

Over a fifth of the young people who completed the survey (22%) feel completely safe outside school and 68% selected 7 or above indicating that for the majority, safety is not a significant concern. Many of those who felt safe, however, often qualified this with feeling safe because they were always with friends and/or family or at home.

Figure 2.2.1 How safe do you feel outside school? (Scale 1-10)



(n=218)

Is there anything in particular that makes you feel unsafe in the community or area in which you live?

The young people were most concerned about intimidating and unknown people in the area, followed by drugs, violence and inebriated people. When asked an open question about what most threatens their safety, 5 respondents mentioned prostitutes.

What makes you feel unsafe in the community?	Frequency
Unknown/ intimidating people	20
Drugs (users and dealers)	14
Violence (fighting/stabbings/knives)	11
Drunk people	9
Crime*	8
Gangs	6
Other	6
Prostitutes	5
Roads/speeding/car crashes	4
Litter (including broken bottles, needles, condoms)	4
Racist abuse/discrimination	3

*Crime includes robbery, murder kidnappers/paedophiles

Is there anything in the area that you live in (Holbeck) that makes you feel worried or concerned? *

Issue	Frequency
Prostitutes	10
Drugs (users and dealers)	9
Litter (including needles, condoms)	5
Drunk people	4
The people/gangs	4
Violence	4
Racism	3
Knife crime	2
Crime	2
Lack of police	1

*responses summarised referring to Holbeck, responses from those who specified they lived elsewhere removed.

15 young people stated that they do not live in Holbeck (although it is unknown how many of the respondents in total actually live in Holbeck), many were from Beeston and they listed drug taking and dealing, gangs, violence, and drunk people as issues that worried them in their area. The notable difference was that they did not cite prostitution as being a concern, but all of the other social problems were the same. In the question asking for specific concerns about Holbeck in contrast to what makes them feel unsafe, the students raised the issue of prostitution more. It appears that action to tackle the issues of violence and drugs would help them to feel safer in their community.

Summary of the impact of the Managed Area on children

Box 2.2.1 - ways in which the Managed Area impacts upon the quality of life for children

- Careful consideration by parents of where they can go with children
- Parental fear about the impact of the area upon children, their risk of harm from living in the area, because of what they are witnessing and being approached by sex workers, and men looking to buy sex
- Parents reported not allowing children to go outside on their own, and in some instances restricting them to playing in their own gardens due to safety fears
- Many parents reported concerns about the effect of the behaviours (associated with the zone) upon young people
- Parents discussed taking action themselves to try and protect their children. For example, clearing up sex litter, evidence of drug and alcohol use, with some checking streets before walking along them with their children
- Children have mentioned that they have seen cars stop, they have been asked about selling sex, so they don't see Holbeck as a safe area.
- Young people are witnessing sex workers doing business (getting in cars, and being asked about the cost of sex) and feeling unsafe as a result
- Young people reported witnessing anti-social behaviour in public places, and feeling vulnerable
- School children attending Ruth Gorse have requested a bus to take them home as they are concerned about their journey and report that their experiences of the Managed Zone are negatively affecting their mental health.

2.3 Perceptions about the work of organisations operating within the Managed Area

The work of charities

There were mixed opinions from residents about the work of local organisations/charities, so both positive and negative views were reported across all events. Some residents reported having no awareness of the local organisations operating in the area, others were aware of one or two of them but were not able to always articulate the scope and remit of their work:

“Dedicated team not very visible, I see the PCSOs more.” Resident, October 2019

“Never heard of Safer Leeds, have no effect on me at all. No relationship with counsellors, don’t know who they are.” Resident, February 2020

I have noticed less women on the street in Cemetery Road, think it is because of charities working with the girls and neighbourhood pressure.” Resident, October 2019

“I have no faith in Safer Leeds, I have been to meetings, and feel there is no support, we are left to solve the problems.” Resident, October 2019

One female resident suggested the Save Our Eyes should be supported more and have increased powers enabling them to remove sex workers off the street (written response September 2019). She also felt that organisations such as Leeds City Council and The Police were not listening to residents, ending her comments with:

“Council should think of what is best for COMMUNITY NOT PROSTITUTES.”

Residents were aware of Save Our Eyes at several of the events, because of their level of activity in the community as well as their internet presence and use of social media. Whilst some discussed the support that Save Our Eyes provided, and their own involvement, others felt that there could be dangers in community members deciding to take more action:

“Me and my wife have set up a small group who stand outside St. Matthew’s Church on a night, we have been there about 8 weeks now, and we are part of Save our Eyes...one night we were abused by a prostitute. On another night I was attacked by a prostitute, physically attacked. She was out of her head on drugs and alcohol, and I was hit over the head with a bag. The police were called and we had the choice of making an arrest, or advising her to go to the zone. She decided to go to the zone, but we don’t feel safe in Holbeck. The prostitutes are on the streets, away from the zone.” Male resident, July 2019

“I pondered on this question when I was last here...I think there are vigilantes, and it will get us into more trouble later on.” Female resident, July 2019

Various views of charities working in the area were evident at the events, with some residents praising their work, and others stating that they did not like their involvement:

“I would like to see the charities change, and most of their work should be to get the girls out. They need a focus for the zone to end, by getting the girls to get out...and a real clamp down on the kerb crawlers. A lot of these girls are doing it because they are on drugs or have been

trafficked, and either way they need setting free...and to be shown a better life and that would make it better for the residents too..." Male resident, July 2019

"Let me give you an example, the other night we were outside of St. Matthew's and there were no women in sight but then Joanna project turned up and out of nowhere, there were 8 women, getting cups of tea and condoms...they should be in the zone." Male resident, July 2019

"Basis is pro-prostitution." Resident, October 2019

The work of Leeds City Council and the Cleansing Team

Another resident said: *"In order to regain trust, the authorities approach to normal people must change. Leeds City Council and The Police must learn to listen to citizens, and stand on their side, help them. If people do not want prostitution in Holbeck, the above mentioned organisations should make every move to remove it."* Female resident, written response September 2019.

"People in power do not live in the area." Resident, October 2019

"Up to this year, I had been very angry but things seem to have improved recently and I feel that the strategic leads are listening." Resident, October 2019

"The council build family homes, but don't keep the area safe for them." Resident, January 2020

Varying experiences of the cleansing team were also reported at the events, with some residents saying that they needed to do more, and others thanking them for doing a good job:

"The cleansing team do a good job but we have to phone them to get them to remove anything that isn't on the road, so it is there until someone phones them, they can only go so far...I have had to put things in the bin that I have found myself, but otherwise you leave it open for the kids...I have had to move stuff from my garden. I think they are overwhelmed." Resident, July 2019

"The cleansing team do an amazing job, which really helps." Resident, February 2020

Mixed views about Leeds City Council were also evident across events, with some residents feeling supported when they had asked for help:

"When I first moved to Holbeck, before the MZ, there was a house at the bottom with a pimp in it, people in and out all of the time, high, drunk and it was Angela Gabriel who got them removed. Since the zone, I have gone to Councillor Scopes, and I have reported stuff to cleansing and it has got stuff removed." Female resident, July 2019

"I am fond of LCC, they run very good libraries. The cleaning services are good and prompt, and when I have reported a stray condom on the street, they clean it up quickly in 2-3 hours, which is what we want to see. In terms of the Police, they didn't take my crime seriously, so I am not a big fan. When I see them in the city out and about they are fine." Female resident, July 2019

Others stated that they didn't receive help despite requesting it. Lack of action from local organisations such as the Council and Police were commonly discussed by residents across the events:

“People talk the talk...but don’t walk the walk...LCC and the police say things are going to be better but they are not...women working outside the hours, the punters, they stop other women and young girls...I have rang the police, they said they would look into it, whether they did or not, I can’t say...they said they would (101 number)...people say it will be more managed but we have got no evidence of that.” Female resident, July 2019

“My neighbours are really negative about councillors because they don’t live in Holbeck, so they feel that they don’t know what it is like. They feel that they care more about the women working than the residents.” Female resident, September 2019

In some conversations, residents acknowledged the challenges of wider funding cuts affecting public services:

“We can’t blame Safer Leeds Police, LCC, we have to blame the government, they made all of the cuts. We need more Police on the streets, that is not their fault, it is the cuts...they do as much as they can. We need PCSOs to have more power as well, that would be better. Safer Leeds needs more power too. Police are getting Specials, it is like charity policing, they are too young and don’t get paid.” Male resident, July 2019

Some felt that the implications of the Managed Area, had not been understood at the outset:

“I feel sorry for them (LCC and Police)– they had good intentions, they put this in place but didn’t realise the magnitude of this. They have tried their best but it is not working, it will hurt a lot more people if it continues and gets bigger. It has gone too far by accident, so they need to admit that it has ruined the community and a lot of lives including children’s.” Female resident, July 2019

The work of the police

Some residents discussed being reluctant to call the police, and others who had called reported feeling dissatisfied with the response of the police:

“Leaving the pub after 11pm, it is a free for all, girls (sex workers) outside of St. Matthew’s, Police Community Support Officers gone, no one to stop them, feel it is all wrong...should extend police community support hours” Male resident, February 2019.

“Walking from town to Holbeck, 2 workers asked if I was looking for business, their male pimp shouted at me and got aggressive – I rang 999 but no response.” Male resident, February 2019.

“I don’t feel that the police are doing much about the issue. They turn up at meetings but then do nothing.” Resident, January 2020

“When someone phoned to report a sex act outside St. Matts church, they said they would be there in 30 minutes, which is too late” February 2020

Several residents discussed not calling the police and not reporting crimes at the January 2020 event, for example when they had experienced damage to their property. There were varying levels of awareness about the dedicated phone line available for residents in the area. A female resident who

witnessed a sex worker shouting and screaming for at least 5 minutes said, *"I tried to call the police, and they said they were too busy."* February 2019.

A male resident reported being mugged in the area of St. Matthews and being taken advantage of by some of the sex workers on at least two occasions, he felt that he had received a poor response from the police despite reporting his experiences.

Varying experiences associated with Police responses were discussed at the May 2019 event, with one resident reporting that they had not been able to get an answer when phoning the dedicated number. In comparison another resident who was the victim of crime (theft) said that the Police had been supportive and had checked in with him to offer further support. On some occasions residents had reported issues, but by the time the police were able to respond, sex workers had moved on (February 2020). One female resident submitted a written response (September 2019) and called for more police presence, whilst saying that she would not report issues to the Police because she did not want them to knock on her door, or for her children to be involved. A different resident at the May 2019 event said that they *"believe that the Police are having a degree of success"*. Positive comments included the following:

"My experience of the Police is good. One time I needed to call, and they helped me fast and safe. I feel satisfied but I understand that they are very busy." Female resident, written response September 2019

"Police are good on a tight budget." February 2020

"Police have prosecuted prostitutes and clients for sexual activity in a public place." February 2020

"Appreciation for the police, they are doing the best they can, best of a bad job." February 2020

"People feel reassured seeing the police patrolling." Resident, January 2020

"I have seen more police patrolling but the women (sex workers) are wise to it and move or hide from them. Increased police presence has not helped, it has pushed them further into residential areas. Holbeck Street Angels standing outside of St. Matts have had more influence than the police." Male resident, February 2020

Another male resident said:

"You can see a response on the online forums as soon as the police target a particular area. Higher resources make an impact." February 2020

Several residents wanted to see more of a dedicated police presence and felt that *"they hadn't been around as they said they would"* February 2020. Residents discussed how levels of police visibility and patrols had changed over time, with some saying that they had been more visible during the review period:

"I constantly look over my shoulder when I walk to work, I am a 36 year old woman, and shouldn't feel like that. It wasn't like this before the zone, then there was a lot of police at first,

then it went quiet and now this review has started, the police are everywhere, it is like police city - they only care when they are being reviewed themselves.” Female resident, July 2019

“4 or 5 years ago, I saw Police around every day, not anymore. Doesn’t make me feel any safer at all.” Resident, February 2020

“I don’t feel that the Police are doing much about the issue.” Resident, February 2020

However, in direct contrast at the same event, other residents stated:

“I see Police around the streets, talking to people. People feel reassured seeing Police patrols.”
Resident, February 2020

“The Police spoke to my children about keeping safe.” Resident, February 2020

Summary of residents’ views about organisations working in the Managed Area

Box 2.3.1 – perceptions of local organisations and their work in the Managed Area

- Those who attended the events had different levels of awareness about the organisations working in Holbeck, and their remits in relation to the zone. For example, some residents praised the work of charities working within Holbeck, whereas others were unable to agree with the scope of the work being undertaken
- Contrasting opinions (both positive and negative) were also evident about the work of statutory local organisations and their remits
- Residents also reported a mixture of experiences (again both positive and negative) when they had been in contact with organisations and requested information and support from them. For example, some had reported being satisfied with actions taken by Leeds City Council and the Police, whereas others reported less favourable experiences
- Some residents said that they felt unheard by organisations
- Some residents discussed how the professionals from organisations were not living locally, and they felt that this limited their understanding of the realities associated with the Managed Area

2.4 Views on the continuation of the Managed Area

Many residents wanted the Managed Area to be completely stopped as an approach, and expressed anger about it continuing in Holbeck, as well as it being given the go ahead. Several felt that the zone had normalised anti-social behaviour and street sex working. Several also described it as “unmanaged”, but others reported uncertainty about stopping the current approach asking if this would result in any changes. One worker also felt concerned that services would withdraw support, if the Managed Area was to stop operating:

“Why does it have to be in Holbeck?” Female resident, February 2019

“Zero tolerance” Female resident, May 2019

“Why does Holbeck have a zone, and nowhere else?” Resident, February 2020

Several were very angry about the existence of the area saying that they did not agree with it, and that it had been forced upon them, others about its cost:

“How much is it costing a year in cleaning etc? What about the hidden costs for businesses? Could use the money for a refuge to get the women out of prostitution.” Female Resident, February 2020

Others suggested that the money being used to manage the zone could be better invested for example, for the future of the local children, to generally increase lighting, to secure the park and vet any tenants living in the area. At the February 2020 event, there was some discussion about the general ethics of the Managed Area, as well as reflection about Leeds City Council’s approach. Leeds City Council was seen to be promoting prostitution by some community members and were described as being complicit with it. Discussion took place about the cost of the area, and whilst there was extensive sympathy for sex workers, residents felt that the area had been imposed upon them and local businesses without consultation, and that the numbers of women working in the area had risen from 32-35 to 140-150 as a result of the zone. One group asked how Leeds City Council “*declared the managed zone a success story shortly after a prostitute was murdered in the managed zone.*” February 2020. There were strong feelings about Leeds City Council, who were described as “*a waste of space*” and “*two faced*”. Some residents had been told that they were supported by a councillor who then went on to vote for the managed zone, with associated feelings of being let down accompanying this.

Some residents suggested that safer premises for sex workers should be made available, as a way to take sex workers off the streets, protect them and to help keep the community and its children safe:

“Why not have a brothel, rather than a managed zone?” Male resident, February 2019

“Yes, to the brothel, but as they are working, they should also pay tax.” Female resident, February 2019

“Take street out of sex work.” February 2019

“We are going back 100 years, this is meant to be a Women Friendly, Child Friendly City...Having the zone normalises it and removes stigma, should it be the norm for it to be okay? The women selling sex in Holbeck are the bottom of the pile. Can we stop the demand for them? They are entrenched in this way of life.” Female resident, February 2020

Some suggested that the zone was too near residential areas and should therefore be relocated:

"Aside from shutting it down, move it to another area, a proper industrial area, and the girls (sex workers) would agree with that." Resident, October 2019.

"I don't want to see them in this area, not to move to another community but away from families." Resident, February 2020

"Somewhere safe, not around the houses and the park." Resident, February 2020

Enforcement was seen as needing to be strengthened in a number of ways. Geographically: *"Thorough enforcement of sex-work outside the zone" (February 2019)* to ensure that the women stayed within the boundaries of the zone:

"Stronger, more aggressive police presence around the zone, to keep the ladies in the zone...and the times of the zone, there needs to be more of a punishment if they are outside of the zone than what they are getting now...thinking outside of the box...getting people who have already been through it." Female resident, July 2020

"I would like the sex workers to stay in the Managed Zone." Resident, February 2020

More enforcement was requested in relation to the men paying for sex, with several residents suggesting that punters needed to be arrested:

"A lot of the problem is punters, target them." Male resident, February 2019

"A lot of the problem is the kerb crawlers, if they can be targeted then we would have less prostitutes." Male resident, February 2019

"More CCTV cameras in the area, and if people are caught then name and shame them" Female resident, February 2019

"Target pimps and punters to ensure that there are more consequences for their actions." February 2019

"Magistrates to enforce more severe deterrents, for example, arrest twice and then ban from Holbeck." Female resident, May 2019

"Why are men protected as kerb crawlers...men should be prosecuted. How can a council say it is okay?" Female resident, February 2020

"West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council are responsible for community safety, and only they can make this area safer." Female resident September 2019 – written response

More enforcement in terms of a stronger Police response was also requested by several community members:

"I know the Police are stretched and they do come on bicycles but by the time they get to the area, the 'people' have moved on so quicker response times are needed." Resident, October 2019

"More patrols, more PCSOs." Resident, October 2019

"Permanent Police Presence." Resident, October 2019

"Police in unmarked cars." Resident, November 2019

Whilst several residents suggested that focus needed to be shifted onto the men who come into the Managed Area to buy sex, others disagreed stating that the women (sex workers) may be easier to target. For example, an attendee suggested that *"if girls are seen they should be made to enter rehab, arrested and given 3 strikes"* (February 2019).

Other suggestions included higher fines, increasing the police presence into the late evening as well as in the early morning, trying to implement a different model, with a few residents suggesting adapting to an approach where *"everything is made legal"*:

"What about making brothels legal? LCC could make more money. We could adopt the Amsterdam approach, it would make it better. They would have to pay taxes." Male resident, July 2019

Some residents were keen not to shift the problem elsewhere but called for more protection and support for sex workers:

"It's not that we don't feel compassion for the women. I don't feel like the support services have managed to get to the heart of the problem. It needs a multi-pronged approach." Male resident, February 2020

"So many factors contribute to women's vulnerability." Male resident, February 2020

Others felt that their own safety should be more of a focus, for example, they should be provided with self-defence classes as well as rape alarms. Many residents suggested that measures such as CCTV, improvements to street lighting and more general community investment, including from local businesses, being brought into the area were all needed:

"Street cameras...we have been promised CCTV but it isn't up yet. We have enough street-lights generally but need more in the back streets and quiet areas." Female resident, July 2019

One resident felt that the focus should be on the landlords:

"Prostitutes live in Holbeck and landlords let it happen, they should vet what is happening in their properties." Resident, February 2020

Improved communication from organisations working in the area was also requested by residents across several events:

"We need a plan to tell residents what is going to happen. Residents need to be informed and empowered." Resident, October 2019

"The community are asked what changes they want but nothing is done." Resident, January 2020

Some residents discussed the need for more of a focus upon the positives of Holbeck and the need to encourage community members to be more active:

“Holbeck is linked negatively to prostitution – can we make Holbeck a more positive place name?” Female resident, February 2019.

“The issue is so complex, people need to change their opinion of Holbeck and promote the positives of the community.” Resident, February 2019

“When we first moved here 43 years ago, Holbeck was a stable community, now it is full of bedsits, transient people, hostels...we need to restore the community rather than just enforce the law.” Male resident, July 2019

Summary of residents questions for key decision-makers in relation to the continuation of the Managed Area

Box 2.4.1 - What is the question that you would like to ask those who make the decisions about the Managed Area?

- How can you create a managed zone, and then not manage it? Where are the girls supposed to carry out the sex acts if they aren't allowed to in the zone?
- Would you commit to living in Holbeck for 2 weeks to experience what we experience?
- I would like to know how the people who support the zone are going to ensure the safety of the residents of Holbeck? I would also like to know why they are supporting a scheme that keeps vulnerable women working on the streets?
- How many people who voted for the Managed Area, live in the area? Of our 3 councillors, do any of them live in the Managed Area?
- Where is the money actually going?
- When will my kids be safe?
- How can both the women be protected, and the residents feel safe, and not have to change their lives due to fear of prostitution?
- What other strategies have you considered, and why have these not occurred?
- Why don't you have it on your doorstep if you think it works?
- Is this going to change?
- Why do policy makers insist it works – is this because they have no plan b and so bury their heads in the sand?
- Why are you so blind to the obvious problems this has caused and why do you insist on keeping the zone open, exploiting women and oppressing local people?
- Would you want this on your doorstep?
- When are you going to protect our children and women who are law abiding, tax paying citizens?
- How many pimps and persons controlling the women have been identified?

2:5 Overview Findings from Listening Well

Impact on adults

Residents reported many negative emotional impacts resulting from their experiences of the Managed Area, for example, frustration, depression and anger. Some felt unheard, and others discussed feeling saddened and disappointed. Several reported these feelings affecting their sleep, and mental health, and others felt vulnerable and were not anticipating any changes to happen.

Fear was a commonly discussed experience for adult residents at the Listening Well events, for example in relation to being approached by either sex workers or kerb crawlers, fear of trouble caused because of the Managed Area and those using it, and fear of witnessing sex acts and in public places at all times of day because of previous experiences.

Residents reported changing their behaviour because of the Managed Area, for example, not going out in an evening, avoiding walking and instead taking taxis.

Adults discussed the impact of the Managed Area on their safety, with many saying they felt less safe, and several noting that sex work was accompanied by social problems related to drugs, alcohol and anti-social consequences such as sex litter. Women in particular felt less safe, and several mentioned “*getting the look*” from kerb crawlers and being assessed as being/not being sex workers.

Impact on children

Parents reported several impacts for their children including them having to consider where they can go with children, the risk of harm from living in the area because of what they are witnessing and the dangers of being approached (by sex workers, and men looking to buy sex). Parents reported not allowing children to go outside on their own, and in some instances restricting them to playing in their own gardens due to safety fears. Parents discussed taking action themselves to try and protect their children, for example, clearing up sex litter, evidence of drug and alcohol use, with some checking streets before walking along them with their children.

Children mentioned witnessing cars stopping, and they have been asked about selling sex, so they don't see Holbeck as a safe area. Young people witnessed sex workers doing business (getting in cars and being asked about the cost of sex) and felt unsafe as a result. Young people reported witnessing anti-social behaviour in public places, and feeling vulnerable

Views on organisations operating within the Managed Area

Those who attended the events had different levels of awareness about the organisations working in Holbeck, and their remits in relation to the zone. For example, some residents praised the work of charities working within Holbeck, whereas others were unable to agree about the scope of the work being undertaken. Contrasting opinions (both positive and negative) were also evident about the work of statutory local organisations such as Leeds City Council and the Police.

Views on the continuation of the Managed Area

Residents offered many suggestions about the ways in which improvements to the Managed area could be made, all summarised in section 3.1 (see below).

3. Recommendations

Identified area for improvement	Recommendation
<p>Policing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police to take safeguarding of residents more seriously • Increased awareness raising for residents in relation to the dedicated number that is available for residents to call • More police presence, both in cars and in increased numbers • Increase police presence at school arrival and leaving times • Improved response times • Widen the area that the Police operate in so that they cover the entirety of Holbeck • Extend the time period over which the Police patrol to the entire night, especially in summer when children are more likely to be playing out later on • Use ANPR to identify repeated kerb crawlers • Target the pimps • Do more than give warnings • Young people asked for more promotion of the dedicated phone line and some asked for more police presence
<p>Area changes with a view to improving safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More CCTV - young people also recommended increased CCTV and better lighting to ensure that they felt safer • Improved lighting (Including in the park) • Tackle the drug issues in the area by taking action against the dealers, rather than offering drug services. Use community members' knowledge to improve police intelligence about drugs and trial methadone clinics. Several young people wanted to see more action related to drugs • Ensure that the cleaning teams operate from an earlier time in the morning • Housing Associations to operate more responsibility – keep individuals with issues away from the area • Services to improve how they work together for information sharing (described as ineffective during the May 2019 event) • Regenerate the area and create an investment plan to fight deprivation • Tackle the criminality starting with residents and the police working together • Neighbourhood Watch to be set up, with residents reporting incidents and then the Police following up • Closing the shops on an evening • Bringing more shops and business into the area so there can be a different street dynamic • <i>“More engaging facilities – a nicer park for children to play, to bring more people into the area which would make it safer.”</i> February 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more clean and safer places for children to play • Invest in community spaces and events: <i>“more activities, café areas, library, learning centre”</i> February 2020 • Target ‘rogue’ landlords • More support for residents especially in relation to mental health • Introduction of more speed control measures • More fines for anti-social behaviour
<p>The management of the zone</p>	<p><i>Moving the location of the zone:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an ‘industrial’ area for safer pick up and sex (away from residents) • Move the area to a location where less people (residents) are likely to be affected by it • Needs more consideration in terms of the places where people go to have sex. The zone is a place to find a prostitute, and then clients should be taken to another place • Some young people suggested that the zone be moved and that brothels be provided so that activity could take place behind closed doors <p><i>Increased enforcement:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the boundaries of the zone clearer, and enforce when these are breached • Deal with the men buying sex (several young people also made this suggestion) • Change the times in which the zone is allowed to operate <p><i>Education:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The image that the Managed Approach gives is that it makes it acceptable for men to harass women in the area – it is educating men.”</i> February 2019 • Try to educate residents about the sex-workers’ underlying issues <p><i>Policy and legislation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament needs to discuss this at a national level
<p>Support for sex workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to rehabilitate the sex workers who have drug addictions • Put more resources into charities that help the women exit sex work • Focus more on services that provide counselling, addiction support and help with childhood sexual exploitation • Try to stop the ‘newer’ women from working • <i>“In the entire time the Managed Area has been set up, there has been no information leaflets available to the sex workers to help them out of slavery/drug dependency.”</i> February 2020 • <i>“How can we stop it, lots of them have suffered abuse in their past?”</i> Female resident, February 2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some young people suggested that more support for sex workers, and help for people with addictions was needed
<p>Relationship with organisations such as Safer Leeds, charities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider communication – leaflets and newsletters from organisations operating in the area • Put people onto the streets as ‘guardians’ (further details not specified) • Longer term planning involving residents • Everything (all information about community organisations/support for residents) in one leaflet • Information all on one centralised web-site • <i>“LISTENING WELL!! Following up on our stories, reports and concerns and actually informing us as residents what changes are made, showing us that they are listening and acting upon it. Trust comes in time.” Resident, October 2019</i> • More charity events • More interaction with community members

4: Voice of Holbeck requests to the Managed Approach leads

In September 2020 a community meeting was held on Zoom, facilitated by Leeds Citizens. This was where initial findings were drawn from the author's draft report so that community objectives could be analysed. These were separated into five sections for negotiation meetings with the managed approach & council leads.

1. COMMUNITY SAFETY

1.1 ANPR

Members of the community felt that ANPR cameras might help deter kerb crawlers from the residential streets, however the leads were less convinced that this would work. They agreed to a meeting for follow on discussions, to include other ideas for reducing kerb crawling.

1.2 Dedicated line

The dedicated Holbeck MA Police line (known as the Batphone) is well liked by residents, though there are issues with service ending at 11pm and some community members being unaware it exists. There was agreement to put together a leaflet about the dedicated line and the cleansing team details that will be distributed across the whole of Holbeck.

1.3 Public spaces

This relates to some areas of unused land in the residential areas that have become magnets for public sex, drug use and drinking. Even areas that are well used are impacted, eg Holbeck Moor. The leads agreed to ongoing discussions to identify these hotspots and rectify the problems, perhaps by re-purposing some small patches of waste land to give it a function.

Green Corridors and safer walking routes would be discussed with the involvement of local ward members, Leeds Regeneration Team and local groups such as the Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum.

2. ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

2.1 PSPO introduction

The community are aware of PSPOs (Public Space Protection Orders) being used in several other areas of Leeds to control street drinking & drug abuse. There is also a precedent in London for an anti-kerbcrawling PSPO.

The leads have committed to further meetings to explore the possible usefulness of a PSPO for Holbeck.

2.2 Greater use of Civil Injunctions

Intended to try and curb antisocial behaviour such as fighting, drug use, dealing and soliciting outside resident's homes. Focus is needed to reduce prostitution related activity that occurs both outside the area of the managed zone and outside the operational hours of 8pm to 6am.

2.3 Review of Cleansing Arrangements

This relates to the very popular dedicated cleansing team. We need to ensure that coverage is correct across the affected areas and that residents know how to summon the team and Scarab machine (known locally as the Durex Destroyer!) The team are currently summoned via the Save Our Eyes Facebook group but it was accepted that other means of calling them in were needed.

3. GOVERNANCE and RELATIONSHIP with STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

3.1 Command structure

Voice of Holbeck asked that they be included at the highest level of the command structure, and referred to the recommendations of the independent review about resident voices. The leads committed to an ongoing discussion about this and how residents could be involved if it was not agreed to.

3.2 Communication and Engagement Plan

Discussions about the lack of clarity for scrutiny and lack of SMART objectives. There are no standards by which the MA is assessed independently.

3.3 Organise Facilitated Conversations

The leads agreed residents' voices should be heard and that more liaison with the charities working to support women and the residents may prove beneficial.

3.4 Introduce Service Level Agreements

We discussed the lack of measurable targets and obligations on stakeholders and commissioned services. The leads accepted that we had legitimate concerns. The new Communication and Engagement Plan creation would offer a chance to review these issues.

4. DRUGS AND ADDICTION

4.1 Training & Education for Young People

VOH asked for training and education in schools and youth organisations. The Police lead explained that the police are already doing drugs talks in schools. It was agreed that VOH would meet with the

ward councillors to compile more accurate information about what provision already existed and what may still be needed before proceeding to discuss with the leads.

4.2 Improve Access to support with drug addiction for Sex Workers

The leads committed to organising an engagement exercise with Forward Leeds so the Voice of Holbeck can build a long-term partnership with them.

4.3 Drug consumption rooms

VOH expressed an interest in this concept, though it is not currently widely used in the UK

5. SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

5.1 Prioritising Police Patrols

VOH asked about police patrols, whether they were regular enough and patrolled the most troublesome areas. The Police lead encouraged the community to feed back where events were happening – they need to report. It was accepted that there is a general lack of reporting from people in Holbeck and we all have a responsibility to provide the Police with timely information.

5.2 Zero Tolerance Approach

VOH raised concerns that there should be zero tolerance towards incidents involving children. For example, where boys have been solicited for business by women and also the more regular occurrences of girls being approached by kerb crawlers and punters on foot. Police leads encouraged the community to report all instances of this.

5.3 Training and Educational Resources

Covered under 5.1, 4.1 and 3.2

5.4 Response Times

Not discussed

6. REQUEST TO BEGIN PLANNING A PHASED EXIT STRATEGY FOR THE MANAGED APPROACH

The leads said they needed to see the interim version Listening Well report and the notes from the workshop where the above five requests were drawn up. VOH supplied the report on 29th October 2020.

5: Appendix

Holbeck Street Prostitution History

Approximately 20 years ago the community leaders of Chapeltown in Leeds joined forces to move street prostitution from the residential areas of Spencer Place & Potternewton Park. It re-emerged behind the Corn Exchange in the city centre with soliciting on-street and using car parks behind Call Lane to take punters. As Call Lane and Lower Briggate were redeveloped, the sex trade started to migrate down The Calls, over Leeds Bridge and into Holbeck. There had been street prostitution in industrial Holbeck long term but it was mostly discreet from the community living further into residential Holbeck.

Holbeck Urban Village was developed roughly 14 years ago in the once derelict backstreets of Holbeck. The Bridgewater Place high rise building brought big business and smart apartments, cafes and commuters to the area. Street lights and bright offices pushed the street-sex trade further into industrial Holbeck. When the 2008 financial crash happened many planned developments in the urban regeneration zone were postponed so prostitution was able to proliferate in the derelict streets. Anecdotal stories from residents recall that Hunslet Moor at the bottom of Dewsbury Rd also had visible on-street prostitution at night time too.

With financial recovery, regeneration restarted. Whitehall Rd and Tower Works redeveloped and many old warehouses and sites were cleared for the South Bank redevelopment project which made the dark lanes disappear and punters seeking a discreet visit to Holbeck's prostituted women had to go further to find a quiet corner to do their business. The on-street sex trade spilled into the community, it had run out of space from the city side of industrial Holbeck and hit the buffer of the residential streets.

In 2014 it was decided by LCC, the Police & Safer Leeds to adopt the Managed Approach to Street Prostitution in an attempt to mitigate its effects on the community and help the women in on-street prostitution keep safe. A year later, Daria Pionko was sadly murdered whilst soliciting in Holbeck, she was 21 and had only been in England for a few months.

Something happened during 2017 which saw the once late night sale of sexual services start to appear in public during the daytime. Prostituted women were visibly soliciting from morning to night, and right across Holbeck and Beeston residential areas. In parks, cemeteries and outside houses, residents started to report sex acts, violent arguments and dangerous litter. Children were seeing this sweep through their streets, around schools, shops and churches. Was it a change in drug use that changed behaviours? Almost universal heroin use amongst prostituted women started to be mixed with other drugs so women were possibly more desperate to be on the streets in a constant search for money to fund their addictions and those of their "boyfriends."

Because the Managed Approach meant sex buying went unchallenged, the punters soon felt an entitlement to come into residential streets and cruise all of Holbeck & Beeston to find prostituted women on the streets. Some of the prostituted women were helped to find housing within the local community meaning houses turned into brothels bringing chaos to residents trying to keep children safe. Many local women were kerb crawled, of all ages, even schoolgirls and the disabled. Pensioners were too frightened to go out.

That's when the community joined forces to form Save Our Eyes, which began as a Facebook group where local residents could report issues with the street-sex trade, collect data, liaise with police and hold Safer Leeds to account. In October 2017 an angry community meeting made clear to council leaders that street prostitution had been allowed to run out of control and the resident's distress was plain to see. Soon afterwards the Voice of Holbeck community group was formed with other local organisations, schools, churches and charities to work towards an end to street prostitution in Leeds.

By Claire Bentley-Smith - Save Our Eyes Committee and Voice of Holbeck Committee Member.

More information about the Save Our Eyes campaign at www.SaveOurEyes.co.uk

Regarding terminology:

“Sex workers” v “prostituted women” v “women in prostitution”

The VOH committee discussed at length which of the commonly used terms should be used to reflect women in street prostitution in Holbeck.

At the start of our journey over three years ago we accepted the term "sex worker" as being appropriate. We believed that the women had chosen to work the streets of Holbeck to earn money instead of getting alternative jobs.

As time went by our conversations with the women, with support agencies and with campaigners led us to think differently. We saw women who, on the surface earned a fortune, but in reality they raided street bins to find scraps of food and cigarettes. Many are clearly in poor health having long term addiction issues. Residents noticed that the money earned would often be passed straight through the window into the drug dealers or pimps car, leaving the woman with nothing. We accept that some sex workers in Leeds do it by choice but we are unable to accept that the Holbeck cohort are there by choice. Their apparent "choice" is a result of their life circumstances: many having been abused as children or forced into prostitution as a means of supporting drug addiction.

For these reasons, some of us see the plight of the Holbeck women as being a modern slavery issue and at the request of campaigners and charities specialising in freeing women from prostitution we prefer to use the terms "prostituted women" or "women in prostitution." We did not specify this to the report authors, feeling it best that they should retain editorial control. Which is why the term "sex workers" is used in this report instead of prostituted women.

by Paula Brown - Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum board, Save Our Eyes Committee, Holbeck Development Forum & Voice of Holbeck Committee Member.

The “zone” in relation to Holbeck & Beeston Hill

The map shows the approximate area of the “zone” in blue. The yellow pins show the usual spread of sex litter through the residential streets of Holbeck & Beeston Hill. The pin at St Matthews indicates the busy “high street” of the community, which has shops, cafes, community centre and housing. Residents have been campaigning for the removal of the phone box there due to women taking men into it to have sex while children can see through the glass. During the 6 years of the Managed Approach it has not been possible to confine street sex to the dedicated “zone” or to the dedicated overnight hours of 8pm to 6am.

Map created by William Birch - Save Our Beeston and Holbeck, Save Our Eyes and Voice of Holbeck committee member. Photo copyright Google.



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